

Christs First SERMON.

OR,
The absolute necessity, duty, and
Christian Practice, of Repentance :
Opened and applied, by a godly, able,
and faithful Minister of JESUS
CHRIST.

Wherin is discovered, what Repentance is ;
as also the great necessity thereof to salvation :
With the great folly and desperate madness
of all those that delay and put off their
Repentance unto a sick Bed, or
Old-age.

Together with the great benefit, joy, and
comfort, that shall be to the souls of all
those that timely and truly
repent.

MATTH. 4. 17.

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say ;
Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

LUKE 13. 3.

Except ye Repent ye shall all likewise perish.

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Christ's first Sermon : OR, The absolute necessity , duty, and Christian practice of Repentance.

Act. 17. 30. 31. *The times of this ignorance God winked at , but now commandeth all men every where to Repent ; because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness.*

The blessed Apostle St. Paul, in these words beloved, endeavours to take off the superstitious Athenians from their Idolatry and worshipping of false gods ; gods of silver and gold , which indeed are no gods, but the work of mens hands ; and this he doth, first, by endeavouring to convince them of the folly of their idolatry ; and then secondly, in laying

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ing before them the power and goodness of God, in making and preserving the world, and all things therein: God (saith he in the fore-going verses) made the world and all things therein, and is Lord over all, and gives to all life and breath, and all things, and in him we all live, and move, and have our being; and it is he that hath set the bounds of our habitations. Therefore (saith he) you need not to think that the god-head is like unto gold, or silver, or stones, graven by art of mans devices, for God is Lord both of heaven and earth. I but say these idolaters, we do as our fore-fathers did, they worshipped such gods as these, and we are of the same religion as our fore-fathers were. But saith the Apostle, this was done in ignorance, and the times of this ignorance God winked at; your fore-fathers had not the light of the Gospel, they never heard of Jesus Christ: but now saith he, Christ is preached, and the light of the Gospel shines forth in the world; therefore now ye must repent and turn from these idols, and serve the living God. Now God commands all men every where to repent, although God in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways: Now hath he sent us to preach Christ unto you, that you should turn from these vanities, and serve the living God: If your fore-fathers knew, it was

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was through their ignorance and want of the knowledge of Jesus Christ ; but if you sin and go on in your idolatry, it's through willfulness, and God will be revenged on you. In the words you may observe these four things ; first, a duty commanded, and that is Repentance ; secondly, the commander and that is God. God commandeth, thirdly the person to whom this command is enjoyned, and that is all men , every where, high and low, rich and poor, all the world over ; fourthly and lastly, the time when , and that is now ; now God commandeth all men every where to repent, now in these times of the Gospel ; To day if you will hear my voice, saith God in Psal. 95.7. From the words thus opened, I shall give you these four practical observations : The first is this ; that Repentance is a needful and necessary duty commanded by God. Secondly that every man and woman in the world is bound to repent. Thirdly, that the doctrine of the Gospel is a doctrine of Repentance : it was Christ's first sermon, as you may see Matth. 4. 17. Jesus began to preach , and to say repent. Fourthly and lastly , observe from these words, that God expects more and looks for more from men under the Gospel, then from those who never heard of the Gospel. These four observations are all of them very clear from the words

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of the text; I shall only therefore give you some few further proofs of them from scripture, and so proceed in the opening and handling of the two first observations, and from thence I shall draw sundry practical uses, which I shall endeavour by Gods assistance to apply home unto your souls. I shall therefore join the two first observations, into one intre proposition, thus; **That** **repentance** **is** **a** **needful** **and** **necessary** **du-**
ty **commanded** **by** **God**, **and** **that** **every** **man** **and**
woman **in** **the** **world** **is** **bound** **to** **repent**; Except
ye repent (saith **Christ** Luk. 13. 3.) ye shall all per-
ish. And 2 Pet. 3. 9. God is not willing that any
should perish, but that all should come to repen-
tance. As I live (saith the **Lord** Ezek. 33. 11.) I
have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that
the wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye,
turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye dye O
house of Israel. And in Matth. 3. 2. Repent for the
kingdome of heaven is at hand. And so likewise
in Act. 2. 38. Repent and be baptized every one of
you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of
sins. Repentance is needful for all, there are
none so wise none so learned and holy, but stand
in need of repentance. In many things (saith **St.**
James) we sin all, Jam. 3. 2. And in Rom. 3. 23.
All have sinned: Young ones have sinned, and
therefore have need to repent, and that bestomes.

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lest as ~~St.~~ Paul saith Heb. 3.13. Through the de-
ceitfulness of sin their hearts be hardened. It's good
soz young ones, yea it's the best course they can
take, as Solomon saith Eccles. 12. 1. to remem-
ber their Creator in the days of their youth; and not
to put off repentance unto old age, or the death-
bed, soz then it may be too late: soz although
true repentance is never too late, yet late repen-
tance is seldom true. It's a good observation
of a holy man; saith he, speaking of the repen-
tant ~~Thief~~, God saved one at the last hour, that
none might despair; and but one, that none might
presume. Thou that wilt not repent when thou
maist, it may be God will not give thee time to
repent hereafter when thou wouldest: Dost
thou think to do that in thy old age, which thou
wilt not do in thy youth? Canst thou do that in
one hour on thy death-bed, which thou art not
able to do sufficiently all thy life-time? And
then likewise old men have need of repentance,
they have lived a long time in sin, and have
long enough, yea too too long neglected repen-
tance: young men may dye soon, but old men
cannot live long; therefore both young and old
have need to repent that they may receive the
remission of their sins, Mark. 1.4. And soz your
better understanding of this great and necessa-
ry duty of repentance, I shall a little shew you
what

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what it is, and that briefly. Repentance is of two sorts, either real or unfeigned, or else seeming and hypocritical; seeming repentance that's common to wicked men, and is altogether legal, arising from the accusations of their own consciences. Such a repentance as this, was that of Judas; and then there is a real and unfeigned repentance, which doth properly belong to the godly, and this is likewise of two sorts; legal and Evangelical: Legal repentance, that comes from the Law, giving us the sight of our sins, and our misery by sin; the law is our School-master to bring us to Christ. Gal. 3. 24. But Evangelical repentance that springs from faith in Christ, and carries out the soul unto Christ in opposition to every sin and to a forsaking of every evil way; repentance then I shall thus describe. I say repentance is a gift of God, by which a believ-ing sinner being cast down in the sight and sense of his own sins doth utterly forsake and abhor all his former evil ways, and turns to the Lord with a perfect heart.

I say it is a gift of God; that which comes from God and not from nature, it's a flower never grew in natures garden, neither birth nor breeding, neither art nor learning nor any other sublunary power or qualification, is able to

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to beget repentance; true repentance comes from above. Every good and perfect gift (saith St. James) comes from above, Jam.1.17. Grace doth not grow here below, but comes down from the Father of lights. The Apostle Acts 11. 18. glorified God, that to the Gentiles he had granted repentance unto life. Repentance is the quickening of a dead soul, and therefore must be the act of him who is the giver of all life. We are all of us by nature dead in sins and trespasses, Ephes. the 2. and the 1. A man by nature is no more able to perform an act of true grace, than a dead person in the grave is able to do an act of nature. They that live in sin (as St. Paul saith of the widow that lives in pleasure, 1 Tim. 5, 6.) are dead while they live. Repentance then is the gift of God, Acts 11. 18. God granted repentance unto life. So in 2 Tim. 2. 25. the Ministers of God are required to instruct those that oppose themselves, with meekness; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil. It's said of Christ Acts 5. 31. He is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel. Faith and repentance are supernatural works, and we may as well create new heavens, and a new earth, as do these acts of ourselves;

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it is God alone that works them in our hearts by the efficacious operation of his spirit, 2 Cor. 3. 5. We are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves, but it's God that works in us both to wil, and to do, of his good pleasure. Phil. 2. 13.

Secondly, repentance is a change; first of the heart, then of the whole man: there must be a new heart, and a new hand; a new life, and a new head; all things must be new where repentance is. If any man be in Christ (saith the Apostle) he is a new creature, 1 Cor. 5. 17. Repentance makes a man a new man, and it is only in the power of God to renew our hearts, neither Angels nor men are able to doe it. In Jer. 31. 18, 19. saith Ephraim, Turn thou me and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned I repented, and after that I was instructed I smote upon my thigh, I was ashamed, yea even confounded, because I did bear the reproof of my youth, Here's the character of a true repentant it is the Lord that must change our hearts, it is he only that must give us new hearts, and take from us these hearts of stone; it is the Lord that must pluck us out of the snares of the devil, and cast down the strong holds of sin in us; if God do not turn us, we shall never be turned. After that I was turned, I repen-

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repented, saith Ephraim. But I proceed in the description of repentance.

It's a gift of God, I say, whereby a believ-ing sinner turns from all his sins unto God; I say a believ-ing sinner, because faith must first precede and go before repentance, for none can truly repent but he must first believe: there may be in a sinner that which we call legal repen-tance, which may cause a sinner to fall out with his sins, and it may be to loath them with a kind of detestation; it's possible a wicked man may repent that ever he knew what sin meant, or that ever he had to do with sin; all this may be, and yet no true repentance, because no true faith; for true repentance causes a hatred of sin as it is displeasing to God, as well as hurtful to our selves, yea he hates sin as hell, yea worse than hell it self; which cannot be in an unbelieveving soul; it cannot be denied but that repen-tance is a saving grace, and if so, then none can partake of this saving grace, till he be first unclad unto Christ the fountain of all grace: so then faith must needs be before repentance.

Secondly, where true repentance is, there is a change wrought in the whole man, and a turn-ing: first, to our selves; secondly, to God; and thirdly to men; an unrepentant sinner is out of himself; and he is not only out of his way,

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way, but out of his wits. In Luk. 15.17. when the prodigal came to himself he said ; Father I have sinned : this is the first step to repentance, self-returning. Secondly, repentance is a returning to God ; If thou wilt return O Israel saith the Lord, return unto me, Jer. 4. 1. The grace of repentance is setably expressed by this act of returning to God, and they who do not repent, are said not to return to God. In Amos 4. 1. God saith, Notwithstanding I have given you cleanliness of teeth, and want of bread, yet have you not returned ; notwithstanding I have withholden the rain from you, and smitten you with blastings and mil-dew, and sent among you the pestilence ; notwithstanding I have slain your young men by the sword, and overthown some of you as I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, by fire ; yet have you not returned unto me, saith the Lord. Repentance is a turning from sin to God ; Sin turns men from God, and drawes the soul into the ways of death, Jam. 1. 14. A man is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed ; drawn away from God and from the truth of God, but when once repentance comes, he turns back again, he changes his minde then, and abhors himself for what he hath done. Job. 42 6. I abhor my self and repent (saith Job) in dust and ashes. The prodigal was drawn away from his fathers house through

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through his own lusts, and yet at last he returned first to himself, secondly to his father ; Luk. 15. 17. when he came to himself he said, I will arise and go to my father and say unto him, father I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

Sinners are said to be mad, but repentance brings men to their right wits again ; every unrepentant sinner is a mad man, a mere devil ; who but a mad man will run himself wilfully into the fire, as every wicked man doth, he runs headlong to destruction : but repentance turns men from this madness. In Acts 26. 18. it's called, A turning of men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Sin is a darkness, and when men sin they know not what they do ; but repentance enlightens men and sets them at liberty. In Acts 26. 20. repentance and turning to God are put together they are one and the same, the one cannot be without the other ; but it's not any turning that doth this, but it's a turning of the judgement, and a turning of the will and affections : so that men that are turned, are carried wholly from sin and wickedness unto God. Joel 2. 12. Turn unto me (saith God) with all your heart : if it be with a peice it's nothing worth, it's altogether deceitful.

Third.

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Thirdly, repentance is a returning to men ; we must not be ashamed to acknowledge our faults one to another. James 5.16. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another. If we have done any man wrong, we ought to acknowledge it. Is it so then that repentance giveth from from faith in Christ, and turns men from sin unto God, then I observe that there are many in the world, who as yet never knew what true repentance meaneth, because they are yet in unbelief and without faith, without which there can be no repentance : Men may cry bitterly, and humble themselves in sack-cloth and ashes, as Ahab did ; men may have the horrors of hell in their consciences as Judas had ; men may reform many things that are amiss, as Herod did, and yet being unbelievers they are still in the state of impenitency : It's an infallible demonstration, that they never yet truly tasted of the love of God in the pardon of their sins, who dare presume to take a liberty to sin, or delight themselves in any sin whatsoever ; they that truly believe, cannot, dare not allow themselves in any sin : for as faith purifieth the heart, so faith and repentance keeps the heart pure, and makes the conscience tender ; and the more pure the heart is, the more will it abstain from all things that are evil.

Then

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Then secondly, is Repentance the gift and grace of God, whereby a believing sinner being humbled under the sight and sense of his sins, doth truly turn to God? Then we may observe, that where true repentance is, there is also humiliation for sin. It is not possible that ever any soul should truly repent, that is not truly humbled and cast down in the sight and sense of his sins. Turn unto me (saith the Lord) with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning, Joel 2. 12. The Ninevites when they repented, they humbled themselves from the highest to the lowest; and this also sheweth us, that the greatest part of men and women in the world never yet truly repented, because they were never yet truly humbled: it is not every kinde of sorrow that worketh repentance, but as it is in 2 Cor. 7. 10. only godly sorrow worketh repentance, never to be repented of. And as there may be a counterfeit repentance, so there may be a counterfeit humiliation: the signes and markes of true humiliation are these. First, the soul that is truly humbled for sin, is very free in the confession of sin; and the Scriptures tell us, that those that have been most humbled for sin, have been freest in the confession of their sins: as David, Nehemiah, Job, and others: Psal. 51. 3. saith David, I acknowledge my transgression,

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and my Sin is ever before me. And this confession of Sin, will be in some meaſures ſuitable to our humiliatiōn; if our ſorrow for Sin be ſincere, our confession will be ſo to: therefore all those who are leſs afraid to commit Sin, then they are ashamed to confess Sin, were never yet truly humbled for Sin, neither ſhall their ſins reaſp any benefit by it. Prov. 28. 13. He that covereth his ſins ſhall not prosper but who ſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them ſhall finde mercy. They that will not finde out their ſins to confeſſ them, to be ſure one day or other their ſins will finde them out to torment them: if ſin finde us not out in youth, it will finde us out in age; if it finde us not out in health, yet it will finde us out in ſickneſſ; if it finde us not out in life, yet it will finde us out in death; if it finde us not out in death, yet it will finde us out after death in the day of judgement; either one time or other our Sins will finde us out. Numb. 25. 33. Your ſins (saith God) ſhall finde you out.

Secondly, godly ſorrow and humiliatiōn for Sin, cauſeth the ſoul that is humbled utterly to loath and abhor and hate Sin; Ezek. 2. 43. Ye shall remember your ways, and your doings where in you have been defiled, and ye shall loath you ſelves in your own ſight, for all your evils that you have committed. Sin is odious and hateful to

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an humble soul ; I abhor every false way (saith David) rivers of tears run down mine eys, because men keep not thy law. Psal. 119. 164. 136. Nature may teach a man to loath sin in others, but it's only grace that teaches us to abhor sin in our selves. When Judah, Gen. 38. 24. heard that his daughter Thamar had played the harlot, he presently past sentence of death upon her ; Bring her forth (saith he) that she may be burned : but when he saw by the pledges that the sin was his own, Judah was then silent, no more talk of burning her then. A soul truly humbled, will hate sin wheresoever it is, especially in his own bosom ; men will die from venomous and hurtful creatures wheresoever they are, especially if they be near them, because they are then in most danger to be hurt by them ; all the sins of the world cannot do a soul so much hurt as his own sins ; then they that do not hate sin in themselves, are not truly humbled for sin.

Thirdly, he that is truly humbled is willing to take shame to himself, the humble sinner is willing to be ashamed of his folly : Ezek. 26. 63. That thou maist remember and be ashamed, and never open thy mouth more, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord.

Fourthly, a truly humble soul will be intelli-

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Willing to receive the word of God with all readiness: What's the reason men are no more humbled for sin? Surely this, because they despise or neglect the good word of God, whitch is the onely means to get humiliti: the humble penitent soul, is the most tractable and teachable soul in the world, and he abobe all other is willing to embraze the word of God.

Fistly, a truly humble soul is ready and willing to put in practise all these duties whitch he hath formerly learned out of the word of God: when Paul was once truly humbled, he conserued not any longer with flesh and blood; but laying aside all carnal reasonings, goes on thorowly in his work of preaching the Gospel. Gal. 1. 16. Thus you may see that where true repentance is there is also a true humiliation and sorrow for sin; then let every one learn to be humble, and that betimes; for as women the longer they are ere they bring forth children the harder is their labour, even so they that put off repentance to old age, must expect the soyer travail. Lamentable are they mistaken who put off their repentance to their old age, is it likely that the pains and weakness of old age will be any advantage or ease to thy repentance? Revel. 16. 19. it's said, That at the powring forth of the fourth Vial, when God smote the inhabitants of the earth

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earth with a scorching heat, that they blasphemed the name of God and repented not. It's a woful thing to put off repentance to a pained body, or to a sick bed; pain in its owne nature fits rather to blaspheme and turn from God, then to return to God, and it's very common that sick persons either repent not at all, or if they do, at the best their repentance is but a sickly repentance; sicknes doth onely abate and restrain the power of mens lusts, it never destroyes the life of sin, death it self cannot kill sin; wicked mens sins live when they are dead, the grave cannot consume them, nor the fire of hell; the sins of unbelievers remain not onely in their guilt, but in their power to all eternity.

Is it so then, that repentance is a turning from sin unto God, then I observe that there can be no true repentance where sin is delighted in: he that liveth in the love and practise of any sin, knoweth not what repentance meaneth; for repentance takes off the heart from the love of sin, and workes it to such a dislike of sin, that it abhors the very occasions of sin; if sin comes and fels a gracious penitent soul of the profits and pleasures of sin, O saith a gracious heart, thy sweetness will prove bitterness in the latter end; true repentance takes off the heart from all sin, as well small as great, not from

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some felv fns, but from all On for he that turns
not from all turns from none in truth : and it
is not enough to turn from all On, but we must
turn from the commands of On and satan unto
the commands of God ; from worldlings, to
heavenly mindedness ; from pride, to humility ;
from hatred and envy, to love ; the tree that
bears not good fruit will be beaten down, and
cast into the fire, as well as the tree that bears
ill fruit. I beseech ye therefore brethren in the
bowels of mercy, for the Lord's sake I entreat
every one of you that desire to be saved, that
you would turn away from all your iniquities,
and that speedily, lest your repentance be too
late : And to this end be earnest with God by
prayer, for the assistance of his spirit in the sub-
duing of thy sins, and cast thy self wholly upon
the Lord.

Every true penitent is wholly the Lord.
The desire of his soul is to God, and to
the remembrance of his name ; with his soul he
blesses God in the night, and with his spirit
within him, he seeketh the Lord in the morn-
ing. Isa. 26. 8. 9. He is now a constant inter-
cessor at the throne of grace, and with full purpose of
heart he cleaveth to God, and loves the place
where his honour dwells, Psalm. 26. 8. All his
desires is to know more of God, and how he may
love

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love him more and serve him better; the service and servants of God, how joyful are they to his soul: He takes all opportunities of doing good, he keeps his heart with all diligence, and the door of his lips that he offend not with his tongue, Psal. 39.1. His heart is so inflamed with the love of God, that he endeavours with all his might to shew forth the praises of the Lord: by which it appears, that a turning to God is not barely a turning from sin, but a practising of good, and a walking uprightly before the Lord in all well-pleasing, all our days.

Is it so then that repentance is needless and absolutely necessary for all persons, in what a sad condition then are the greatest part of men and women in the world, who as yet are as far from true repentance as light is from darkness, and yet poor souls they swit themselves up with this conceit, that God is merciful and they hope to be saved as well as the best, and they thank God all is well with them, and yet notwithstanding they never repented of their sins: truly repentance, is a grace almost out of fashion in these self-conceited times, wherein mens minds are so much running after novelties, and outward formalities: but the power of holiness, and the doctrine of repentance and self-mortification, these are not minded; nay by many are

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accounted legal, and altogether needless.

There are three sorts of people that I shall have occasion to speake off in the use of this point ; and the first, are such as altogether abhorre repentance ; the second are such as although they acknowledge repentance is needful and necessary for others, yet think that they themselves have no need of it ; and the third sort are such as do confess that repentance is needful even for themselves as well as others, but nev-
er yet; it is time enough hereafter, there's no such haste of it. And I hope in the handling of these three sorts of persons, I shall make it appear that repentance is needful and necessary at all times for all sorts. Having done this, I shall remeber some lets that hinder men from repen-
tance, and so give you some few motives to stir you up to repentance ; and then to winds up all in a word or two of application.

I begin with the first of these, those that abhorre repentance : and they are wilful sinners, such as go on in sin, and make it even their trade to sin, wilful, desperate, and dissolute wretches, that laugh at repentance, who declare their sin as Sodome did, and hide it not, Esa. 3.9. Who will not be brought to abandon their wicked ways; but go on still in swearing and cursing, lying and blaspheming, whoredoms,

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drunkenness, and all uncleanness, and that with greediness, as the Apostle saith; Who mock at faith and repentance, as these scoffers did in 2 Pet. 3. 4. These are they, as St. Peter saith 2 Pet. 2. That walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleannesses, and count it pleasure to riot in the day time; whose eyes are full of adultery, that cannot cease from sin: O but the latter end of these men is worse then their beginning. How many wicked wretches are there, that live as if they had made a covenant with death and hell, and were at an agreement with the grave, who had rather hazard their souls then leave their sins, who as if there were neither heaven nor hell, run on from one sin to another. Come (say they) we will fetch wine and fill our selves with strong drink, and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant. But Esa. 56. 12. Wo unto them (saith the Prophet) they have rewarded evil to themselves. How little do these men think, that God will one day wound the hairy scalp of such as go on in sin, and that tribulation and wrath, indignation and anguish, shall be upon every soul that doth evil, Rom. 2. 9. Let men slight repentance never so much a time will come when they shall repent, but that too late, even in hell fire for ever. For sin must be repented of, if not on earth, yet in hell; and if you will not loth your compa-

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companions in sin here you shall loth them to hell hereafter, your pat-companions and your harlot companions shall loath one another in hell; then these bloody wounds shall bleed which you have given your souls in the dages of your jollity and pride, and in the times of your desperate impieties: when nothing but wrath and horrour of conscience shall appear before you then these sweet mazels of God, which have been sweet as honey to your lustful appetites, shall be vomited up as the bitterest and loath-somest things in the world. Consider this all ye that forget God, Lest he tear you in pecces and there be none to deliver you, Psal. 50. 22. We will bring to forlake your sins, say sin and the soul must part or else hell and the soul shall meet together: The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God, Psal. 9. 17. D that you would seriously lay these things to heart, and now, even now in this your day, that ye would know the things that belong unto your everlasting peace: To day if you will hear my voice (saith God in the 95 Psalm) harden not your heart. Hight not, scorn not, resist not, the good word of God that invites you to repen-tance but bye at off your sins by repentance, and turn to God in righteousness.

And now for the second sort, and they are such

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such as think they need no repentance; And they are either such as are morally civil and honest before men, or else formal and hypocritical professors, who seem to be and are not. who profess God with their lips, but deny him in their lives: & they have no need of repentance, they are no drunkards, nor swearers, nor such like; God I thanke thee (said the proud Pharisee) I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, Luke 18. 11. We are such as profess God, and know much of the minds of God, and therefore have no need of repentance, they are guilty of no sins to repent of. But of these it may be said as Peter said of Elmas the sorcerer, Act. 13. 10. That they are full of all subtilty, and enemies to all righteousness, who never yet knew what sin meant. For they that think they have no sins left to repent of, it's a clear argument that they never yet truly repented themselves of any one sin at all, but that they are still in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity: For repentance is a continued act, and a grace that must have its daily operation; as faith and love must continue, so must repentance: when once the rocky heart of a sinner is smitten by God, the water of repentance will continually flow; sincere repentants cannot content themselves with one act or two of repentance, but they must daily

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daily renew their repentance, for sin will renew so must repentance; renewed sins must have renewed repentance, till we have done sinning (and that will not be till we have done living) we must not have done repenting; if there be a leak in the ship the water must be pumped out, else the ship is in danger of sinking, we are leaking vessels all of us, yea the best of us; sin leaks in daily, and is renewed daily, and there must be the pump of repentance to carry it out daily, else our souls will be in danger of sinking. And for the other sort, who think they need no repentance, they are poor moral honest men, who live in a course of civility and take their penitence to be as white as any others; they are as good as the best, and therefore have no need to be any better; they are not desperately wicked as many are, they are no blasphemers, nor drunkards, they go to Church and give every man his due, and are loving to their neighbours, and what needs any more? It's true these things are necessary, and are required in a Christian; but yet civility without sanctity, at the best is but gilded Atheisme; morality and seeming vertues are but gilded sins, and glittering abominations; the Lord seeth many a rotten base stinking heart under a civil coat: if civility and morality would have served the turn, then

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then the Pharisēs would have gone to heaven before any other ; they were civilly honest , they were no swearers, nor drunks, they paid tithes, and gave alms , and prayed often, and carried themselves so exact in the world, that it was thought that if but two men in the world should go to heaven , a Scribe should be one, and a Pharisēe the other. But what saith Christ ? Matth. 5. 20. Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisēs, ye shall not enter the kingdome of heaven : And yet their righteousness far exceeded the righteousness of all our moral honest men. Let a man be never so honest in outward appearance , let his carriage and behaviour be never so spectious and plausible in the eyes of the world , let him be never so exact and just in his dealings with men , yet if he be not renew'd in the spirit of his minde, he is never the better for this. If he be not a sanctified Christian , the word of truth never as yet came home to his soul, in the power of it, he is still in the state of nature, and without God, and as yet far from repentance and salvation.

And then there is a third sort of impenitents, and they are such as are convinced of the necessity of repentance, but they do not think it a time now to repent ; they believe they must repent, but

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but all in good time, there's no haste or need yet, it will be time enough hereafter, at the hour of death, when age and sickness is upon them; and they think it a thing of nothing to repent, they can do it when they list, l's done with a wet finger, there needs no more but to say Lord have mercy upon me, when they are going out of the world: this is the general disease with which most men are infected. But let such men know, that it is a hard matter to repent, and sin is very powerful, and if they do not seek to get it removed in the strength of their dayes, it will be too hard for them at the last; for although men grow weaker and weaker, yet sin growes stronger and stronger, and being as we say bred in the bone, nursed up by us in our youthful dayes, it will not easily be rooted out of the flesh: Can the Blackmore change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? Jer. 13. 23. no, they cannot; no more can they that are accustomed to do evil, leave it when they list.

If repentance be a thing so easie, how is it that many who sought after it, could never obtain it? How many are there that have roared and cried in the darkness of their souls, and in the horrore of their consciences, that they could not repent O that I could repent, O that my hard heart would break in peeces? this hath been the

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the cries of many. It is not in the power of man to repent when he pleases, but God gives us space to repent now, it may be he will not do it to morrow: a man by nature as he cannot of himself, so he hath no inclination of himself to repentance. Repentance it's a heart-work, a circumcising of the heart, and casting of sin out of the soul, which indeed will make the heart to bleed; which thing no natural man is either willing or able to do. Mortifie (saith the Apostle Colos. 3. 5.) your members which are upon earth; which thing suits not with a natural man. Let no man then put off repentance, upon such scatich wicked thoughts as these, that repentance is an easie work which a man may perform when he pleases, such sinful thoughts as these will deceive you: thou that wilt not repent now thou mayest, when thou wouldest it may be thou shalt not be permitted; you that will not repent when God gives space, how justly may be when thou wouldest deny it that? because when it was offered to thee thou refusedst. Ezek. 24. 13. Because I wouldest have purged thee and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness, saith the Lord. The longer men live in sin, the stronger will sin grow in them; he that will not leave sin when he is young, will hardly leave it when he is old;

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as it's said of wicked men in Job 20. 11. Their bones are full of the sins of their youth, which lie down with them in the dust. **N**ot that mens sins were buried with them in their graves, for then they might be happy, but that they continue with them till death, yea after death. **M**any a time and often hath the Lord knockt at the door of mens consciences, and knocked to come in. Rev. 3. 20. Behold I stand at the dore and knock (saith Christ.) **D**o not let God wait long, he hath waited a long time already, to be gracious unto thee, Isa. 30. 18. **D**o not give the devil the prime and strength of your dages, and then think to serve God in your old age: you do not leave sin in this, but sin leaveth you, you have not the strength and power to sin then as you have had, but still your hearts are as bad as ever they were; then pat not off your repentence till sickness comes: **H**appy, yea thrice happy is that man, and blessed shall he be, that in the time of his youth and health, garnishes his heart and soul with comforts against the evil day; happy is that soul, who when age and sickness comes, is so fitted for death by repentance, that when death comes he hath nothing else to do but to dye. **W**e perswaded then to repent be times, before you go hence and be no more seen; **W**here's no time ours but the present time, we

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Do not know whether we shall live another day, another night, many that are in health one day, are brought to their graves the next. Our life (saith St. James) is but a vapour that appeareth for a little time, Jam. 4. 14. we are no sooner born, but we begin to dye. Put not your souls off them from day to day, he that's unfit or unwilling to repent to day, will be so to morrow; therefore Seek the Lord while he may be found, Isa. 55. 6. There's a time when God will not be found: Prov. 24. to the 20. saith God. because I called and ye refused, and set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof, therefore will I laugh at your calamity, and will mock when your fear cometh; when distress and anguish cometh upon you then shall ye call on me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but shall not finde me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not chuse the fear of the Lord; therefore shall they eat the fruit of their ways, and be filled with their own devises. There is a time when mercy may be had, but if we neglect that time, it will not be received again though it be sought for with tears; there is a time; when with the wise Virgins we may enter into the wedding, but if we take not that time we may with the foolish ones have the door shut against us, Matth. 25. Then may we knock and call, yea cry, Lord, Lord, open to us; but the

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Lord shall say unto us, I know you not. The old world had a long time of repentance, 120 years did Noah preach repentance to them, and yet they repented not; but the Ninevites they had but a short time given them, but forty days, and yet they repented; they made the hay of repentance whilst the sun of Gods patience shined upon them.

God is not bound to wait mens leisore, the soul is but a tenant at will, and may suddenly be turned out of doores. and when you lye upon your sick beds, the Lord may fill your hearts with such feares as may make your consciences altogether despair of mercy. God sent you his serbants early and late, in season and out of season, to invite you to repent; but you will repent you say hereafter, you will if you can, you hope God will work it in you. What ground habe you of this hope? hath God made you any such promise? Then canst not draw out the thred of thy life one minute, for ought thou knowest this day may be thy last day, the tenders of mercy and the offerrs of grace are at an end when thy life ends, if not before, you know that time and tide stayes no mans leisore; every one is so wise as to take time and tide for worldly affars, will any man be so scottish as to defer the time of his sowing, till harvess? men will

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will not be carrying out of dung, when they
should be fetchling in of corn: no they will dis-
patch these things first which are of most neces-
sity. And is there any thing of moze necessity
then the salvation of your souls? will your souls
be saved without repentance? or can you repent
when you will? But you will say you are young,
and therefore may re boyn with a while, which
is the debils divinity; for young men have no
moze liberty allowed them to sin, or to put off
repentance, then old men have; it's the debils
policy to infuse this into thy brains, that he may
ensnare thee. It was the commendation of Ti-
mothy, that from a childe he had known the holy
scriptures. 1 Tim. 1. Young saints say some (but
not the word of God) probe old debils; but I
am sure it's a rare thing to see an old sinner to
become a young saint. When the debil and sin
have lorded it in your soul, yea tyrannized both
over soul and body, for thirty or forty years to-
gether, do you think that a little groaning or
crying Lord have mercy upon me, will be able to
dispossess him at the last, he hath gotten too
strong a footing in your soul to be beaten out of
his quarters so easily; he that will not remem-
ber God when he is young and living, it's great-
ly to be feared God will be unmerciful of him
when he is old and dying. Wherefore once more

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I beseech you in the bowels of Christ, speedily to set about the work of repentance, lest when it is too late you repent, weep, and mourn, that you repented not before. Do not say of repentance as Felix spake to Paul, Thou wilt repent when thou art better at leisure, another time shall serve the turn; it may be thou maist not live to another time, or if thou dost, thy heart may then be as hard, if not harder then now it is: would you not in the day of the Lord be in a worse condition then heathens or infidels are: then repent. Would you not when you are dead be in a worse condition then toads, or serpents: then repent.

It may be said of every impenitent sinner, as Christ said of Judas in the 26. of Matthew and the 24. verse, It had been good for that man if he had never been born. Heathens in the day of judgement, shall be in a better condition then impenitent Christians, for they shall have the lesser condemnation, because of their ignorance; who it may be would have done better if they had known more. It shall be more tolerable (saith our Saviour) for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgement then for thou Capernaum, thou England; That art exalted up to heaven in Gospel-mercies, take heed and beware lest thou beest thrown down.

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down to hell in Gospel-vengeance.

I should now shew you the lets that hinder men from repentance, and so endeavor to remove them; but I shall onely name them, and so conclude with some few motives to stir you up to repentance. Now the lets that keep men off from repentance, are either from sin and satan, or else from our selves, and the world; the devil persuades men that repentance is a needless work, and men need not trouble themselves with it, for those that God hath ordained to life shall be saved, let them live never so loosely; and those that he hath appointed to wrath shall be damned let them repent never so much. But to remove this let out of the way, know this; that all those that God hath ordained to salvation, shall first or last, more or less, be brought to embrace the means. In the 13. of the Acts and the 48. As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed. God hath joined the end and the means together, and cursed is he that dares to separate them; salvation without repentance is impossible, without holiness no man shall see God, Heb. 5.19. A second way by which the devil keeps men off from repentance, is Gods mercy; God is merciful saith the devil, his mercy is over all his works, and he that made you

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Will not damn you you need not to fear it. True it is, even to wicked men God is merciful; but these are but mercies on the left hand, common mercies; it's a mercy to men that they live, it's a mercy that we were not born monsters, and it's a mercy to have outward enjoyments; but what are these to the peculiar mercies of God? It was a good speech of a godly man, saith he, he that made thee without thee, will not save thee without thee; if thou art in a ditch and wilt do no more to come out but cry, God help me, thou mayest lye and perish. O do not dare to go on in sin, because God is merciful; Shall we sin (saith St. Paul) that grace may abound? no God forbid; I dare not saith a gracious heart: if ever you would partake of mercy, you must depart from iniquity. 2 Tim. 2.19. Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. I dare boldly say, that if all the clouds of heaven should continually shew down mercy, there would not so much as one drop fall upon any unpenitent person.

Thirdly the devil labours to keep men off from repentance, by bringing them to despair of mercy; if he cannot work men into presumption by the consideration of Gods mercies, he will do what he can to bring them into desperation, by telling them that mercy is out of date.

But

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But let not this hinder thy repentance, soz as it cannot be too soon to repent, so it's never too late to repent better once then never ; I do not speak this, that any should neglect to repent b-
times, but that none shold ever despair of mer-
cy, and thereby be hindred from this duty of re-
pentance. A second let that hinders repentance,
is the world, the lusts of the flesh, and the pride
of life, the pleasures and preferments of the
world ; these fight against the spirit, and resist
the work of repente : voluptuousness and
drunkennes unsits men for repente, therfore
these must be abstained from (1 Per. 2. 11.) as
things that war against the soul. Mortifie there-
fore (saith the Apostle) your members which are
upon earth, fornication, uncleanness, &c. Col. 3.
5. these must be mortified. And then a third let
that keeps men from repente is sin, sin hath
such a commanding power over the soul of un-
regenerate persons, So that (as it is Rom. 6. 10)
they give themselves over as servants to sin, and to
uncleanness. ¶ then for the Lords sake, abode
all occasions of sin. let not sin therefore reign in
your mortal bodies, that you should obey it in the
lusts thereof, neither yield you your mem-
bers as instruments of unrighteousnes unto
sin, but yield your selves unto God, as instru-
ments of righteousness, Rom. 6. 12,13. ¶ that

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I could prevail with you, and that the Lord would perswade your hearts of the dreadful and doleful condition of all impenitent sinners. Consider then I beseech you in the fear of the Lord, these following considerations; and first of all know this, you that live in the love of sin, you live in the hatred of God, for the love of God and the love of sin cannot possibly dwell together, and they that dwell in it shall never dwell with God. Psal. 15. saith David, Lord who shall abide in thy tabernacle, who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness. And the Apostle saith in the first of the Corinthians 6. 9. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdome of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankinde, nor theeyes, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdome of God. And Psal. 97. Ye that love the Lord hate evil. Also, 2 Tim. 2. 19. Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity. Secondly, all those that love sin, or are under the command and power of sin, are of the devil; For he that committs sin (saith St. John, Joh. 3. 9.) is of the devil. And is it not a sad thing to be under the power of the devil? Every wicked man is the devils slave, and he doth

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both the devils drudgery ; where ever sin is, in the love of it there is also the devil, the devil keeps court in wicked mens hearts. Thirdly, sin is the high way to destruction ; Is not destruction to the wicked? saith Job in the 31. 3. Yes that it is ; And a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity. Fourthly and lastly, sin brought wrath and condemnation upon the soul ; It ye live after the flesh ye shall die, Rom. 8. 13. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God, Psal. 9.17. These things being considered & seriously taken to heart, we thinks should not only awaken sinners out of their sleepy security, but also provoke them to repentance. And then there is another let which hindres men from repentance, and that is in themselves, which is of all other the greatest let ; for did not our own base hearts deceivous the devil, the world, and sin, could never hinder us from coming to God by repentance ; & these lets from our selves are either from ignorance or hardness of heart, Eph. 4.18. Men (saith the Apostle) through the ignorance that is in them, and through the hardness of their hearts being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousnes, and to work all uncleanness with greediness. Ignorance must needs be a great let to repentance, no wonder when men know not the danger of sin, nor the necessity

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of repentance, that they live in sin and never come to repentance, who is there that seeks for that he knoweth not of? If impotent sinners did but know what a dangerous condition they were in without repentance, they would never suffer their eyes to sleep, nor their eyelids to slumber, before they had made their peace with God by repentance: Then for the Lord's sake, get acquaintance with God, and learn to know what an odious thing sin is, Job. 22. 21. Acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee, thereby thou maist be brought to repentance. Then secondly, there is in us hardness of heart, which hinders the work of repentance; 2 Chron. 36. 13. It's said of Zedekiah, That he hardened his heart that he might not return to the Lord his God. And this hardness of heart is very lamentable, because all the means which God uses to soften, work not upon it at all; And Pharaoh hardened his heart, and would not let the children of Israel go, Exod. 8.32. All the sore judgments of God upon him could not prevail with his hard heart, he would not let them go; so wicked men whose hearts are hardened, they will not let their sins go, neither the judgements nor the mercies of God will prevail with wicked men, to turn them from their sins, Amos 4.12. saith God, Though I have sent

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sent among you judgement upon judgement, plague famine, and noisome beasts, yet have you not returned unto me. Wherefore I beseech you, in love to your poor souls, that by prayer you would beg of God to give you softened hearts, that may melt and tremble at the word of God, lest by going on in your sins, ye bring upon your selves swift destruction. And so I come to give you some means and motives to stir you up to repentance, and so I shall conclude.

The first and principal means of working repentance where it is not, is the word of God; Matt. 4. 17. And Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent for the Kingdome of heaven is at hand. Christs first sermon was a sermon of repentance, therefore if ever you would repent of your sins, attend upon the word of God. What a woful sad condition are those in that want the word of God: what the Preacher said, Eccles. 11. 6. in the morning (saith he) sowe thy seed, and in the evening with hold not thy hand; so say I of hearing the word of God: hear it in the morning, and hear it in the afternoon; hear it on the Lords day, and hear it upon the week day, take all opportunities of hearing the word of God.

And then a second help is, to consider the goodness and power of God, his almighty and his all-seeing eye, consider God sees and knows all

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the wages, and is able to punish thee for all thy sins; if men were but convinced of this truth, they durst not sin so boldly as they do: But I pass this to give you some few evidences of the truth of repentance, and they are by these.

First the soul that hath truly repented is very careful to avoid even the occasions of sin, and keeps himself at a distance both from sin and sinners, he will dispense with no sin at all, but will say as Enthraim did, what have I to do any more with sin? And secondly, he that is truly turned from sin unto God, will endeavour to turn others also: he is not content that he himself is turned to God but he will draw others to God also. Thirdly, he that hath truly repented is very careful to furnish himself against the assaults of the devil; *Psal. 119.11.* Thy word (saith David) have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. A true repentant treasures up the word of God in his heart, and walks worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing being fruitful unto every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. *Col. 1. 10.* They do as it is in *Psal. 119.23.* They keep the testimonies of God, and seek him with their whole heart; they also do no iniquity, they walk in his ways; Their delight is in the law of God, and in his law they do meditate day and night,

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night, Psal. 1. 2. Fourthly, he that hath truly repented is full of holy indignation against sin, and turnes sin quite out of dores, he cannot indure the sight of it. Fifthly, he that hath truly repented is full of fear, he is filled with an awfull, reverential and filial fear of the majesty of God, and he is afraid of displeasing God by sin. Sixthly, a true penitent is full of holy and heavenly desires, he desires more of God, and more acquaintance with the wayes of God, more communion with God in ordinances. Sevently, true penitents are very zealous for God; O how do I love thy law, saith David, in the 119. Psalm. A godly man cannot endure to see God dishonoured; as it is said of Lot in the seconds of Pet. 2. 8. He vexed his righteous soul from day to day, with their unlawful deeds. And then lastly, wheres true repentance is wrought, it will work a holy change in the soul, and wheras sin was formerly delighted in, the true penitent hath it in indignation, they will not onely turne sinne out of dores, but also are ready to cut it in peices as it were; true penitents have a fæling on their hearts for sin, and will loath themselves for the evill of their wayes. It's a hard thing for a man to loath himself, every man naturally loves himself, but true penitents loath and abhor

them

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themselves as Job did; a repentant eye sees matter enough in himself, of self-abhorrency; repentance let's us see what black devill'd creatures we are by nature. Ezek. 2. 43. You shall remember your wayes (saith the Lord) and shall loath your selves in your own sight; and to much for the evidences of repentance.

Is it so then, that repentance is so absolutely necessary to salvation, and that there is great danger in putting it off from day to day, and that a sick bed repentance is no repentance, or at most but a sickly repentance; how highly then doth it concern every one of us. even to day, while it is called to day, to begin our repentance; and not only to begin, but to persevere in it to the end of our days: let the time past of our lives suffice us to have wrought our own wills; and to have walked in our own wayes, and let us resolve for the time to come to live unto God, and be not weary for in due season thou shalt reap if thou faint not: make repentance thy daily work, that so thy peace may be made with God, and when thou comest to die, thou mayest have nothing else to do but to die. He that labours not to kill sin by repentance in his life, will be very unfit to die when death comes, death is onely welcome to a gracious penitent soul; they are not fit to die,

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die, in whom sin is not killed by repentance, they have done nothing of that work which God sent them into the world to do, that have not repented ; repentance sweetens our lives, and takes away the bitterness of death, and only to penitent sinners is mercy promis'd. Consider there is an absolute necessity of repentance, we cannot be saved unless we repent ; Except ye repent (saith Christ) ye shall all likewise perish, Luk. 13. 3. Consider also thy life is but short, thou hast but a little time to live in the world, thou hast need to bestir thy self then, and to husband thy time to the best advantage of thy soul. Consider also the end for which Christ came into the world : Matth. 9.13. I came (saith Christ) to call sinners to repentance. Be zealous therefore, and repent, and as John saith, Matth. 3. 8. Let us all labour to bring forth fruits mete for repentance. Now the Lord work these truths upon your hearts, and the Lord give every one of us repentance unto life, repentance never to be repented of : which the Lord of his infinite mercy grant unto us all.

The glass doth run, the clock doth go,

Awake from sin, why sleep you so ?

In sin sleep not securely still,

Lest thou by sin thy soul doest kill :

While thou hast time do not delay,

Deser not off from day to day ;

Thou

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Thou art not sure to tarry here,
No not one quarter of a year ;
No not one week, nor yet one day,
One hour thou art not sure to stay ;
Thou hast not space in thine own power,
To live one minute of an hour :
The present time see then thou take,
Thy peace with God in Christ to make.
Keep Faith and true Repentance still,
And then let death come when it will,
Thou art prepared for to dye ;
And thou shalt live eternally.

F I N I S.

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Edward Hollard

Reader, be pleased to take notice ; that this Author hath another excellent Book in print, called, The Everlasting joyes of Heaven ; Or, the blessed life of a Christian ; in Grace here, and in Glory hereafter. To be sold in the Old Baily.

